

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## EXODUS 4-7

When George Bush was president he ran into a man at the airport with long gray hair, a beard, a white robe, and a staff. President Bush walked up to him and said, “Has anyone told you, you look like Moses?” The fellow didn’t answer. He stared straight ahead, stone silent.

Suddenly, the President yelled, “Moses,” expecting to startle him. He just kept staring into the distance.

President Bush pulled a Secret Service agent aside and pointed to the robed man, “Does that fellow look like Moses to you?” The Secret Service agent agreed. The President said, “Whenever I yell his name, he ignores me and stares straight ahead. Watch...” Bush yells, “Moses,” but the man completely disregards him.

Finally, the agent walks up to the man and asks, “You look like Moses. Are you Moses?” The man leans in, “Shhhh! Yes, I’m Moses, but the last time I talked to a bush, I spent forty years wandering in the desert.”

Well, today, we’re in Exodus 4 eavesdropping in on **Moses talking to a bush**. Moses the shepherd saw a bush burning, but not burned up, and God spoke to him from the midst of the bush, “Moses, Moses!... Do not draw near this place, take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.”

God had a job for Moses. His people, Israel, had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years, and God wanted to use Moses to deliver them. *And you’d think Moses would jump at the assignment...* Forty years earlier he’d tried to deliver his people. One day, he saw an Egyptian mistreating a Hebrew. He killed the Egyptian with his bare hands, *yet the Hebrews squealed on him.*

He ended up a fugitive in the desert of Midian. *At the time God wasn’t ready to use Moses, and Moses wasn’t ready to be used.* But the day has come. God calls from a bush. God will unleash His miraculous power; yet Moses now doubts he’s up to the challenge.

And Moses comes up with excuses for why he’s not the man for the job... In 3:11, Moses asks, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?” In verse 13, he asks God again, “when the Hebrews asked who sent me what will I tell them?” Moses is questioning both *his fitness for the task and his reception from His people.*

Chapter 4 begins with another excuse, “Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’” Moses doubts if his people, the Hebrews, will trust that he’s

really spoken to God.

Yet God bolsters his confidence with three signs...

The first sign is in verse 2, **"So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A rod."** This was his shepherd's staff - about six feet long, with a hook on the end that snagged endangered sheep.

Over the forty years Moses tended sheep he became extremely attached to this rod. In addition to rescuing sheep, He used this rod to scale steep cliffs, reach hard to get to places, beat back brush, and fight off wild animals. This rod was always by Moses' side.

It was not uncommon for shepherds to have the same rod their whole life. Moses' rod was more than a stick, or staff, it was Moses' best friend, a proven ally.

**"And (God) said, "Cast it on the ground."** *A shepherd would never throw down his rod.* This was like telling a policeman to give up his revolver... God is saying to Moses, **"Turn loose of what you've been relying on. Throw down the source of your self-confidence."**

**"So (Moses) cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it."** Since Moses was a shepherd and spent time outdoors, certainly he knew snakes. He runs from this one probably because it was poisonous. The snake may've been *the desert cobra*.

It's interesting, the crown worn by the Egyptian Pharaoh was shaped like a coiled cobra ready to strike. The cobra was the Pharaoh's official insignia.

**"Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail"** And anyone who knows snakes would never pick one up by the tail. A snake is a tube of muscle. It'll twist and strike. It's safest to pick up a snake behind its head. *Yet God is specific here, "take it by the tail."* God is teaching Moses to trust Him!

**(And he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand),** It immediately stiffens and turns back into a stick of wood. And verse 5 predicts the impact this miraculous sign will have on skeptical Hebrews, **"that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."**

And the question for us is the same as it was for Moses, **"What is that in your hand?"** *What are you trusting in instead of God?* You need to throw it down.

You might view it was an ally, but God sees it as a snake. Anything we ultimately trust in other than God will poison us. *God wants to use what's in our hand, but not until it's been surrendered to Him and His will.*

Then God gives Moses a second sign - a Napoleon Bonaparte impersonation. He sticks his hand inside his coat. "Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow." Moses' hand becomes leprous when he positions it next to his heart. And that's our problem, before we come to Jesus our heart is wicked.

"And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh." God has power over both snakes and leprosy.

Snakes are a type of Satan. Leprosy is a symbol for sin. God is able to overcome both sin and Satan!

In verse 8 God provides Moses a third sign, "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river (the Nile) and pour it on the dry land. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land."

Egypt's most vital asset was the river that ran through the heart of the country. The Nile's annual flooding irrigated the fields that fed the nation. To turn its water to blood would be an ominous warning to Egypt, and a convincing show of authority to Hebrews.

God is addressing Moses' doubts and excuses. He'll arrive in Egypt armed with three signs that will serve notice to Egypt, and rally support from his own people.

But in verse 10 Moses musters another excuse, "Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." It's possible that Moses had a stutter, or some other speech impediment, but in Acts 7:22 Stephen testified that Moses was "mighty in words and deeds."

Stephen and the Holy Spirit describe Moses as an effective communicator. *That's why I believe he was groping for an excuse here...* He might've stumbled over a word every now and then, and admittedly his Egyptian was rusty, but he was an adequate speaker. *He just doesn't want to go to Egypt.* That's the issue.

"So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?" And here's one of the strongest biblical statements on the sovereignty of God. Nothing happens apart from God's will. The *purposes of God* are even behind the *laws of heredity*.

The Bible teaches that congenital disease and birth defects were originally the result of man's fall and the first man, Adam's, sin... *nevertheless, God has power to prevent those defects.* He's in total control. And He chooses to allow these imperfections for His purposes.

You wouldn't think that it's a golf ball's *dimples* or "*imperfections*" that cause it to fly so far. But if the ball's surface were perfectly smooth it would fly at most 130 yards off the tee. It's the pot-marks that minimize air resistance and allow the ball to fly twice that far. And God has a purpose for our *dimples* or *imperfections*.

In light of verse 11 we should conclude that all human life needs to be celebrated - even a baby born deaf, or blind, or with a cleft palate, or down syndrome. These so-called "*defects*" were allowed by God. *Who are we to say one genetic package is any more deserving of life than another? Do we know better than God?* A birth defect doesn't justify aborting that baby.

Children with special needs require extra effort from parents and society. These children and parents deserve our support... *Remember, we're all born with a handicap, a major birth defect!* It's called a *sin nature*. And unless Jesus fixes us, it sends our soul to hell.

*The point God is stressing to Moses is that if God makes the mouth; then He can surely cure a stutter.* Apparently, at one time Moses had been a fluent and articulate speaker, but for the last forty years he'd been preaching to sheep. *Every sermon was baaaaad.* Now Moses is skittish about starting over, his skills are rusty.

*Yet how can he resist God's command?* Verse 12, "**Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.**" The God who made man's mouth will guide Moses' mouth. *God will run his sound. God will be the sound man for Moses' ministry.*

Until now God has been patient with Moses. He's dealt with His servant's excuses lovingly and gently, *but the one thing God won't tolerate is unwillingness...*

That's what angers God. Moses says, "**O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.**" "*Please Lord, send anybody but me.*" Moses doesn't want this job. He resigns before he even signs.

*Again, God is patient to a point.* As long as our excuses are legit, God will shore up our inadequacies with assurances and signs, but if we're just unwilling this angers God. There's a huge difference between, "**I can't**" and "**I won't.**" Moses just doesn't want to go.

Verse 14, "**So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also**

coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs.”

Moses will hold the rod, and hear from God, but Aaron will be the anchorman - the talking head, so to speak. Moses will speak for God and Aaron will relay what he tells him. *And realize this will not be a good solution.* It's more a punishment for Moses' reluctance. Aaron will cause Moses and Israel a lot of problems.

Moses though is ready. God has answered all his excuses. Verse 18, “So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, “Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.” Moses doesn't say His mission is *deliverance*. He tells Jethro it's just *surveillance*.

Moses probably figured there's no way this man will believe God is going to use his son-in-law to save three million people from the mightiest army on Earth.

It reminds me of the mom who asked her son what he'd learned in Sunday School. He said, “While Moses and Israel's Army were on the shore shooting missiles at the Egyptians - the Navy in ships and the Marines in helicopters - shuttled the Hebrews across the Red Sea.” The mom said, “Johnny, are you sure that's what your teacher told you?” He replied, “No mom, but if I told you what she really said, you'd never believe me.” That was the idea behind Moses' explanation to Jethro.

“And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go, return to Egypt; for all the men are dead who sought your life.” The daughter of Pharaoh who fetched Moses from the Nile was probably an 18th dynasty princess named *Hatshepsut*. Incidentally, her brother, Thutmose II, was famous for killing the male babies of his enemies.

His son, Thutmose III, would've viewed Moses as a rival. Exodus 2:15 says he sought to kill Moses and forced his exile to Midian. But eventually Thutmose III dies. *“The men are dead who sought Moses' life.”*

He was succeeded by **Amenhotep II** - who looked amazingly like Yul Bruner. Actually, in 1907 Grafton Smith analyzed the mummified remains of this pharaoh and found lesions all over his body as if he'd suffered a plague. Amenhotep II was likely the Exodus pharaoh.

“Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took **the rod of God** in his hand.”

Notice, prior to Moses throwing it down his shepherd's staff was called *the rod of Moses* - now it's "*the rod of God.*" Moses was fraught with a sense of inadequacy, but what he did have he dedicated to God.

And when he picked it up again... *the same rod that belonged to Moses was now a tool in God's hands.*

Verse 21, "And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go."

In other words, God won't let Pharaoh off the hook until he's learned the lesson God wants to teach him.

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn." The firstborn was the cherished child. And to God this was how He felt about Israel among the nations. "So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn."

If Pharaoh holds on to God's firstborn he'll lose his own. Pharaoh's stubbornness will cost him severely.

Verse 24 describes a strange incident, "And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" So He (God) let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!" - because of the circumcision." *What in the world?* Moses and his family are in route to Egypt, when they stop for emergency surgery. Zipporah reluctantly circumcises her son.

Recall circumcision was God's sign to Abraham that identified his family as God's people. To refuse to be circumcised was to deny one's relationship with God.

Evidently, Moses' wife, Zipporah, *a Midianite not a Hebrew*, refused to have her son clipped. Not until Moses was near death did she give in and obey God.

This is a bizarre incident, but it's an all too familiar lesson for married couples. Wives, resist your hubby's leadership, and it can cause God to punish him and your family. Perhaps, he's dying inside, because you're holding him back from doing what God requires of him.

And men, God holds you responsible for the spiritual direction of your family. Apparently, Moses caved in to his wife. She didn't want to circumcise her child, *and rather than Moses manning up and doing the right thing, he failed to obey God for fear of upsetting his wife. I wonder if this ever happens in your marriage?*

*Moses can't lead a nation if he can't lead his own family? And God punishes, not Zipporah, but Moses. The man is held responsible. "With spiritual authority, at home and at church, the buck stops with the buck."*

Verse 27, "And the LORD said to Aaron (this is the brother of Moses who'll help him lead Israel), "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him.

So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped." After four-hundred years of bondage Israel is about to be free.

Chapter 5, "Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." Again, this was probably Amenhotep II, who ruled Egypt for 26 years.

Historians know quite a bit about this Pharaoh, but not much is written of the second half of his reign. There are monuments to him in Egypt that were never finished. It's as if he died suddenly, in midstream.

Here's several images of Amenhotep II, but in my mind he'll always look like Yul Bryner. And remember his famous line - "So let it be written, so let it be done." That was my philosophy raising teenagers, "So let it be written, so let it be done." *We're not arguing about it...*

And when Yul Bryner refuses to budge, Moses and Aaron tell him, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." Here's an important principle: *God's deliverance is not an end in itself.* He doesn't just deliver us *out*, without bringing us *in*.

Moses wanted His people to make sacrifice. *God brings us out of bondage to turn us into worshippers.*

And notice Moses' insistence on three days. There were three days separation between their bondage and their worship... *And that's true of us, between Jesus' death on the cross and His new life were three days!*

Verse 4, “Then the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labor.” And Pharaoh said, “Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor!” So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, “You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words.” In the ruins of ancient Egypt, from the time of Amenhotep II, we’ve found depictions of slaves making bricks from mud. This pharaoh was known for his ruthlessness and cruelty.

This Pharaoh wasn’t just going to roll over for a couple of Hebrews slaves. He retaliates. He punishes the Hebrews on account of Moses’ bold demands.

“And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, “Thus says Pharaoh: ‘I will not give you straw. Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters forced them to hurry, saying, “Fulfill your work, your daily quota, as when there was straw. Also the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten...” The Egyptians used rods to beat the soles of their prisoners’ feet, so that every step would remind them of their defiance to Egypt... And while the Hebrew leaders were beaten they were taunted, “Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?”

“Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, “Why are you dealing thus with your servants?” They’re saying, *enough is enough!* “There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, ‘Make brick!’ And indeed your servants are beaten, but the fault is in your own people.”

The children of Israel want an explanation. *Why the cruel treatment? Why these impossible demands?*

“But (the Pharaoh) said, “You are idle! Idle! Therefore you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.’ “Therefore go now and work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks.”

And the officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in trouble after it was said, “You shall not reduce any bricks from your daily quota.” Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. And they said to them, “Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in



their hand to kill us." They get angry at Moses. They say, "*No straw is the final straw! You're doing us more harm than good!*"

Verse 22, "So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all." Moses is so discouraged. He must've thought he would just walk in and Pharaoh would cooperate.

*But that wasn't God's plan!* Forty years in the desert had convinced Moses of his inadequacy. I'm sure he prayed, "*God, I knew this would happen. I'm a failure.*"

Moses didn't need to fail to know *Who* was in control, but the Hebrews needed it to happen. God will use Moses in miraculous ways, but it's crucial the people see that he very capable of failure. If Moses had been successful on his first try, it would've been difficult for the Hebrews to differentiate between God and His messenger. The Hebrews needed this initial failure from Moses to get their eyes off of him and onto God.

Chapter 6, "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh." The Pharaoh had made this personal. God is going to take him to the woodshed. "For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land." And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I was not known to them. I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant."

God is moved by *commitment to His covenant* and *compassion for His people*. He heard their "*groanings*." He cares for *His people*. And He honors *His promises*.

Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.'" God's people will not stay in Egypt. Slavery is not their destiny. He guarantees their deliverance.

Yet... "So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage." Despite the three signs God gave to

Moses the Hebrews were still left unconvinced. They had backslid. Their faith was almost nonexistent.

*Moses had nobody to stand with him, but God.* Oswald Sanders, in his book *Spiritual Leadership*, makes this comment, “The leader must be one who, while welcoming the friendship and support of all who can offer it, has sufficient resources to stand alone, even in the face of fierce opposition... He or she must be prepared to have ‘no one but God’.” Every spiritual leader lives this at some point. You’re not really trusting God until you can turn loose of everybody else’s hand.

Verse 10, “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land.” This time there’s no mention of three days. *Just cut to the chase, we’re outta here.*

“And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, “The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me...” Moses is thinking, “God, You’re asking me to be bolder... I can’t even convince the people, let alone the Pharaoh?” And Moses falls back on an old excuse, “for I am of uncircumcised lips.” Literally, I’m an unacceptable or inadequate speaker.

Ever heard the expression, “Excuses, excuses, excuses.” It was DL Moody who once said, “Excuses are the cradle in which Satan rocks people to sleep.”

Verse 13, “Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.” **The LORD spoke!** *It could’ve been audible.* But God spoke in an undeniable way that silenced Moses’ doubts, and erase his excuses - *that’s still the power of God’s word.*

Verses 14-25 actually organizes for Israel’s exodus. He identifies the leading tribes - the family trees of Jacob’s first three sons: **Reuben, Simeon, Levi.** Moses and Aaron were among the Levites. Verse 20 identifies the names of Moses’ parents: **Amram** and **Jochebed.**

Verse 26 sums it up, “These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, “Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.” These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron.”

“And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “I am the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you.” But Moses said before the LORD (he’s still voicing his excuses), “Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?” We find out in Chapter 7...

“So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall speak to Pharaoh, to send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." God's purpose in sending Moses isn't just to deliver Israel, but to humble Egypt and its Pharaoh. There're lessons God will teach Egypt. At times He'll harden Pharaoh's heart to do so. God won't let him off the hook until he gets the point.

God is going to use the exodus to prove to Egypt and her neighbors that He is the one, true God. In fact, the ten plagues we'll read about aren't chosen at random. Each plague targets a different Egyptian deity. In 12:12 God says, “**against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.**” With each plague God calls out a different Egyptian idol and proves His superiority.

What goes on at the exodus is what's happening in the world today: God is at war with the cobra, or Satan.

Verse 6, “Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. And Moses was 80 years old and Aaron 83 years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.” Notice, Moses and Aaron were in their eighties when they began their ministry. Which just goes to show, **you're never too old to serve God.**

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent.'” The supernatural sign that proved to the Hebrews God was with Moses, will say the same to Egypt. “So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.”

But Satan also has power... “Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents.” In 2 Timothy 3:8 Paul names these Egyptian magicians, Jannes and Jambres. And their feat was no slight of hand. The occult is real. Satan too performs miracles to confuse and deceive.

In fact, a future pharaoh - a last days' dictator, the Antichrist - will deceive many with “**lying wonders.**”

Yet look what happens, “But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.” 1 John 4:4 tells us, “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” Round One in this heavyweight slugfest between God and the cobra goes to God. His power is greater than the powers of Egypt.

But notice Pharaoh's reaction, verse 13, “And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.” Pharaoh was stubborn and because of it this is will be a fight that goes the distance. God will win in a ten round knock-out!

Verse 14, “So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear!

Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I am the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that are in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.” As we've said the Nile River was sacred to Egypt. They relied on it to feed the nation. Egyptians literally believed the Nile was *the bloodstream of Osiris - god of the underworld*.

Thus, in turning the Nile to blood God was mocking Egypt's false gods. He's making their silly Osiris bleed!

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in buckets of wood and pitchers of stone." And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. The fish that were in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.” Egypt also worshipped the crocodile - and a bloody river was an assault on their habitat. So when neither Osiris or the crocodile can protect his environment it shows what a *croc* their religion was.

But “Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments;” Again they duplicate God's miracle. And this why we know witchcraft and sorcery are real.

This is why you should also avoid Harry Potter and similar tales of witches and warlocks. They're a danger to your kids. Tales that glamorize the occult can suck kids into a dark world that lusts for satanic influence.

It's not until we get to the third plague, the proliferation of lice, that Egypt's wizards can no longer match miracles with God. Three strikes and they're out.

After the water turned to blood, "Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said." *I guess Pharaoh was in a state of de-Nile.*

"And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river." This was an EPA nightmare. *Blood pollution of the Nile.*

"And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river." A week without water should get your attention. But not with this hard-hearted Pharaoh. It'll take nine more judgments to break him down. *And nine more judgments is exactly what God has in store!*

Next week we'll cover Exodus 8-11.